



October 30, 2020

Message to Duncaster Residents and Families

Michael A. O'Brien, President and CEO

The headlines this week have been disheartening and to add to our misery it's been snowing all day. We are seeing a global resurgence in COVID-19 cases and Connecticut is now experiencing a significant outbreak and the highest positivity rate since June. Positive rates are increasing in our region and the town of Bloomfield now has a positivity rate of 11.7 per 100,000 population. A rate above 14 would put Bloomfield in a high risk category. These metrics drive our decision making regarding infection control measures, reopening strategies and our guidelines for managing the risk of the virus. Should the positivity rate rise above 14 or if we have an outbreak, we may need to revert to more restrictive measures and some of the opening activities may need to reverse course. As you know the safety of our residents and employees continues to be our highest priority.

Visitation

Caleb Hitchcock Health Center

On September 17, 2020, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) released revised visitation guidance for nursing homes during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency.

This guidance provides core principles and best practices for nursing home visitation, both indoors and outdoors. At Caleb Hitchcock Health Center (CHHC), we follow this guidance utilizing screening procedures for any type of visitation, practicing hand hygiene, wearing face coverings or masks, maintaining social distancing, wearing appropriate PPE, cleaning and disinfecting high touch surfaces and areas, create cohorting of COVID positive residents and complying with CMS regulations for staff and resident testing.

Following a person-centered approach and adhering to CMS and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance, CHHC accommodates indoor compassionate care visitation for any resident that has had a significant change in condition or is deemed as being end of life. We are also continuing with outdoor visitation; however, with the cold weather upon us, the plan is to initiate indoor visits as soon as the CHHC is off the outbreak mode and this week's staff and resident COVID-19 results are negative. The indoor visits, once allowed, will continue as long as CHHC does not have any new onset COVID-19 cases and is not conducting outbreak testing.

Independent Living

We have been developing thoughtful and careful guidelines to enable friends and family to visit residents in their apartments during the COVID-19 pandemic. With colder weather upon us, it is important to move visits indoors. However, allowing visitors into our community brings risk, so we must do this with an abundance of caution. We anticipate announcing our plans for indoor visitation early next week.

Assisted Living-Thistle Way/Talcott Notch

Indoor visitation started on Thistle Way/Talcott Notch this week! We are allowing 30 minute visits in a designated area on the Thistle Way/Talcott Notch neighborhood. Two adult visitors at a time may visit. Visitors must first be screened at the Aquatics Center for symptoms, travel history and educated on instructions for visitation. They will then be escorted to the 4th floor to the designated area of the visit. All visitors must wear a mask, remain 6 feet apart and use hand sanitizer. Visitors may continue to sign up for visits on the *Sign Up Genus* for time slots of M-F 10:30 am, 11:30am 1:30pm and 2:30pm. Please call the Assisted Living nurse (ext. 5152) with any questions. Visitation is subject to change based on prevalence of cases in the area.

Testing Update

Weekly Staff Testing

In response to the rising levels of COVID-19 cases in the state, the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) is requiring all facilities to test all staff weekly until further notice. DPH is asking facilities to move to weekly testing *no later than the week of November 1st*. As such, beginning next week, Duncaster will begin testing all staff weekly. In addition, we are requiring all essential contractors to be tested on a weekly basis.

Caleb Hitchcock Health Center. All staff and residents were tested this week and results are pending.

Assisted Living-Dogwood. There was no testing of staff and residents at Dogwood this week due to 14 days of all negative results. Weekly testing for staff starts next week.

Main Building-All Staff, Independent Living Residents and Assisted Living Residents (Talcott Notch /Thistle Way). There no testing of staff and residents this week due to 14 days of all negative results. Weekly testing for staff starts next week.

Travel Advisory

The state's Travel Advisory directs all travelers to self-quarantine for a 14-day period when entering or returning to Connecticut from one of the identified states. As of October 27, 2020, the following 42 locations meet the criteria and are included in Connecticut's travel advisory. They are:

Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Guam, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming.

This list will continue to be updated on a weekly basis as the situation develops across the country. Please remember that the DPH recommends that you should quarantine for a 14-day period if you have been in direct contact with someone who has traveled from one of the above states or outside of the US or if you have traveled outside of the US.

Helpful Tips

As I walk through the halls I am pleased to see reasonably good compliance with mask wearing. However, there are times when I see rather unusual and incorrect mask usage. I fully recognize that the mask may be an inconvenience and uncomfortable; however, we all know it's one of the most important tools currently available for limiting the spread of COVID-19. Please remember to wear a face mask any time that you leave your home. Here are a few helpful tips on mask wearing:

- Your mask should be worn over your nose, mouth and chin.
- Always wash your hands before and after wearing a mask.
- Use the ties or loops to put your mask on and pull it off.
- Don't touch the front of the mask when you take it off.
- Put the mask on and remove it while inside your home.
- Wear your mask in hallways, elevators and stairwells, and in all Commons areas.
- Please keep your mask stored in a paper bag when not in use.

CORRECT USE



EXAMPLES OF INCORRECTLY WORN MASKS



**COVER
YOUR NOSE**



**COVER
YOUR CHIN**



**THIS IS
TOO LOOSE**



**DON'T REST
MASK ON NECK**

We understand this continues to be a very challenging time for everyone, and we ask for your continued patience and understanding as we work together to keep everyone safe.

Be safe, be well.